

# How to deal with bullying



[www.luton.gov.uk/cfis](http://www.luton.gov.uk/cfis)



# Do you know facts?

**“Schools must have an anti-bullying policy designed to stamp out bullying in the school.”**

*Source: How to deal with bullying/Department for children, schools and families/2005*

*To find out more read Luton Borough Council's overarching Anti-Bullying Policy or visit: [www.learning.luton.gov.uk](http://www.learning.luton.gov.uk)*

**“One in three 12 to 15 year-olds reported having been cyberbullied.”**

*Source: [www.society.guardian.co.uk](http://www.society.guardian.co.uk)/September 2007*

**“72% of victims of homophobic bullying have a history of absenteeism.”**

*Source: Guidance for the construction and revision of school anti-bullying policies/September 2007*

**“Most bullying involves a series of incidents over time. In case of racist bullying, however a single one-off incident may have precisely the same impact as a series of incidents over time.”**

*Source: Guidance for the construction and revision of school anti-bullying policies/September 2007*

# What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone is deliberately hurtful to others over a period of time. The person being bullied usually finds it difficult to defend themselves. There are different types of bullying, but the four main ones are:

**Physical** - hitting, kicking, taking belongings or money

**Verbal** - name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks

**Indirect** - spreading nasty stories about someone, not including them in social groups, influencing others to ignore them on purpose

**Cyber** - using computers or mobile phones to intimidate or humiliate others, happy slapping, hate websites/blogs

In addition other forms include:

**Homophobic** - any incident mentioned above which is perceived by victims as being the result of sexist or homophobic attitude of the perpetrator(s)

**Sexist** - any incident mentioned above which is perceived by the victim as being the result of sexist or homophobic attitude of the perpetrator(s)

**SEN/Disability** - any incident mentioned above which is perceived by the victim as being a result of their special educational needs or disability



# Children's Guide

## How to deal with bullying

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset. It can make you so worried that you can't work well at school and some children have skipped school to get away from it. It can make you feel that you are no good, or that there is something wrong with you. Bullies can make you feel that it's your fault.



**Here are some ideas about how you can deal with bullying. Think about your situation, and what options might be best for you.**

- don't ignore bullying - it won't go away on its own and it may get worse
- tell someone you trust - such as a teacher, parent or friend
- remember - it's not your fault. No one deserves to be bullied
- keep a record - and save any nasty texts or emails that you have been sent
- try to stay away from the bullies or stay with a group when you don't feel safe, ask your mates to look out for you
- try not to retaliate you could get into trouble or get hurt
- check your school's anti-bullying policy. This will tell you what your school should do about bullying
- try to act more confident - even if you don't feel it

## **I'm too scared to go to school-what should I do?**

No-one has the right to stop you from going to school. Try taking a quiet moment to talk to someone you trust and tell them about the problem. That could be a teacher at your school or someone else you feel comfortable talking to who could get in touch with your school and work out a way to help you.

## **If I do what they want, will they stop?**

No. If someone's bullying you, then going along with it will just let them know that what they're doing is working and they will keep doing it. Try to talk to someone who can help to make it stop.

## **How can I protect myself?**

The best way to protect yourself is to tell someone so that you can get some help. If you try to fight back, you might make the situation worse or get into trouble yourself.



# Parents Guide

## How bullying can affect you as a parent

Wanting your child to be safe and happy is natural. If your child is being bullied or is bullying others you may feel angry, hurt, guilty, helpless or afraid. Memories of your own childhood may complicate your feelings about what is happening to your children. You may find yourself wanting to take some of these feelings out on the other children involved or on the school, but this won't help your child.

## Worried about your child being bullied?

Children may find it hard to talk about being bullied or bullying others, and you may not be sure that your child is being bullied. But here are some signs that may suggest there is a problem. Look out for:

- excuses to miss school, such as stomach complaints or headaches
- finding out your child may be skipping school altogether
- torn clothes, school things that are missing or broken, or loss of money
- more bruise and scrapes than usual
- signs of stress, being moody, silent or crying, or bullying a younger sibling or friend
- bed wetting (in younger children)
- a change in eating habits

## What to do when bullying is a problem

- listen and talk to your child. They may feel out of control and ashamed regardless of whether they are the bully or being bullied. Let them know you love them and want to help
- be clear that it is important for the bullying to stop and that the school will need to be involved
- if your child is bullying others, think about what might be behind it. Are they trying to get attention or fit in with the crowd? Are they unaware of how they are hurting others?

- talk to the school as soon as possible
- If you don't see an improvement ask to see the school's anti-bullying policy and make an appointment to see the headteacher
- encourage your child to keep a journal in which they can draw pictures or write about bullying as this can help to release painful feelings and will be a record of what happened and when it happened
- take care of yourself. Coping with your child's bullying may be very stressful, especially if it brings back memories of experiences that you may have had yourself. Try to take time for yourself or talk over what you feel with a friend or another family member



## What to do when bullying is very serious

If the bullying is so bad that your child is too frightened to go to school or if you fear for their safety, there are a number of steps you can take:

- you may decide to keep your child off school until the matter is resolved. Legally you must send your child to school regularly. If you keep your child at home, you will have to write to the headteacher with your reasons and provide a doctor's sick note

- if the bullying is extremely serious (either physical or verbal), the police may need to be involved
- if you decide to make a formal complaint that the school is failing in its duty of care towards your child, ensure that you follow the school's complaints procedure. Keep copies of your correspondence - you may need to refer to it later. If there are no procedures, write to the chair of governors. (You could ask a solicitor to write your letter of complaint)

## Talking to your child's school

Schools are determined to stamp out bullying and must have anti-bullying policies to help the school, children and parent's to work together. You may feel a bit nervous about going into your child's school, especially if you had a bad experience at school yourself so its important to trust the school when it says its policy is to stamp out bullying.

### Helpful advice on how to approach the school:

- plan what you want to say and talk to your child about what is happening
- if you feel nervous about going to the school, ask a family member or a friend to come with you
- start by making appointments to see the right people. Begin with your child's teacher, move onto the year head, the deputy head, the headteacher and then the school governors

Teacher

Head of the Year

Deputy Head

Head teacher

School Governors

- before you talk to anyone at the school, count to 10 and take a deep breath. Avoid doing anything in the heat of the moment
- focus on feelings rather than trying to prove who did what. If a child is upset, it must be taken seriously
- ask for everyone involved to be partners in solving the problems
- ask what action will be taken and write down what is said
- you may not get instant results. Take things one step at a time and arrange to talk again in a few days' time to check progress. Say you will ask your child for a progress report each day
- find out if there are people your child can talk to of the same age. As part of their anti-bullying programme, many schools run programmes where pupils support other pupils

## If you are not satisfied with the school's response

What if your child continues to be bullied and you are unhappy about the lack of progress at the school? You may want to do more. Sometimes this will be a long and difficult process, but you and your child have rights too.

Follow these steps carefully until you feel that the situation is being dealt with:

- check that the school has an anti-bullying policy and that procedures are being followed. Contact the headteacher and ask for a meeting to discuss what can be done
- write a letter of complaint to the school (maybe with a solicitor's help)
- write to the chair of school governors with a copy of the letter of complaint. Set out your concerns and what you would like to be done
- contact the director of education at your local authority
- lastly complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills

## What if your child is bullying others?

If your child is bullying others, ask yourself what might be behind it, are they trying to get attention or fit in with the crowd. Maybe they don't realise that they are hurting others? **Research shows that 20% of pupils who are bullied also, at times, bully others. A child can be both bullied and a bully.**

### If your child is bullying others:

- sit down with your child and find out what has been happening
- ask your child how they think the bullying can be stopped. They may need help from you and the school to change the situation or the way they are acting. Let your child know that you still love them as a person, it is their behaviour you want them to change
- your child may be going through a difficult time, either at school or at home, and acting out aggressive feelings. Try to get to the root of the problem, and find out what is upsetting them. Talk through any family problems and talk to the school about any educational support that could help
- try to take a firm yet gentle approach - be willing to listen to your child's side of the story while also insisting that the bullying has to stop. If you are too harsh, your child will not feel like talking
- explain what is wrong about any kind of bullying - whether physical or verbal, such as name calling, nasty teasing or leaving someone out of doing things. Give examples of how hurtful this can be
- if they don't want to talk at first, let them know that you are ready to listen when they are ready to talk, and that you will do what you can to help them change their behaviour or the situation
- is there a bigger problem? Is your child involved with a group of children who are bullying others? Your child may be frightened about what will happen if they tell on the group. Maybe your child has also been bullied and is scared to talk

## What is it?

“Cyberbullying” is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

Cyberbullying is usually not a one-time communication, unless it involves a death threat or a credible threat of serious bodily harm.

## How it works?

There are two kinds of cyberbullying, **direct attacks** (messages sent to the victim directly) and **cyberbullying by proxy** (using others to help cyberbully the victim, either with or without the accomplice’s knowledge).



### **Direct Attacks are carried out through the following:**

**Text message bullying** involves sending unwanted texts that are threatening or are hurtful. This is one of the most common types of Cyberbullying

**Picture/video clip bullying via mobile phone cameras** which threaten or embarrass, through images usually sent to other people. ‘Happy slapping’ involves filming and sharing physical attacks. Boys favour this

**Phone call bullying via mobile phone** is done through silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the person’s phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone

owner is responsible and take action. Perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified. This is the most common type of cyberbullying and the most favoured by girls who are more likely to take part in cyberbullying than boys

**Email bullying** makes use of email to send bullying or threatening messages, often with an invented false name or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them. This is a common type of cyberbullying

**Chat-room bullying** involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room

**Bullying through Instant Messaging (IM)** is an internet-based form of bullying where children and young people can be sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online

**Bullying via websites includes** the use of defamatory web logs (blogs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying.

## Cyberbullying by proxy

Cyberbullying by proxy is when a cyberbully gets someone else to do their dirty work. Most of the time the person is an unwitting accomplice and doesn't know that they are being used by the cyberbully.

Cyberbullying by proxy sometimes starts with the cyberbully posing as the victim. They may have hacked into their account or stolen their password. They may have set up a new account pretending to be the victim. But however they do it, they are pretending to be the victim and trying to create problems for the victim with the help of others.

Sometimes it is much more serious than that. When cyberbullies want to get others to do their dirty work quickly, they often post information about, or pose as, their victim in hate group chat rooms and on their discussion boards.

## Take a stand against cyberbullying

### The STOP, BLOCK & TELL Rule

- **STOP!**  
Don't do anything. Take 5!  
to calm down
- **Block!**  
Block the cyberbully or limit  
all communications to those  
on your buddy list
- **and Tell!**  
Tell a trusted adult, you  
don't have to face this  
alone

### What parents can do to prevent cyberbullying:

The first thing a parent can do to prevent cyberbullying is to make sure that they and their child are aware of the dangers of putting too much information in the public domain. Posting personal details and photographs on websites such as Facebook and U Tube may seem fun but the details can fall into the wrong hands and put young people at risk. Similarly children should be careful to whom they give their mobile phone number and be prepared to change it if it starts to be abused by others.

Teaching kids to “Take 5!” before responding to something they encountered online is a good place to start when an unpleasant incident occurs. Jokingly, tell them to “Drop the Mouse! and step away from the computer and no one will get hurt!”



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Encourage them to find ways to help them calm down. This may include doing yoga, or deep breathing. It may include running, playing catch or shooting hoops. It may involve taking a bath, hugging a stuffed animal or talking on the phone with friends. Each child can find their own way of finding their centre again. And if they do, it should prevent them from becoming a cyberbully, even inadvertently. Teaching them the consequences of their actions, and that the real “Men in Black” may show up at their front door sometimes helps. Since many cyberbullying campaigns include some form of hacking or password or identity theft, serious laws are implicated. Law enforcement might get involved in these cases.



But we need to recognise that few cyberbullying campaigns can succeed without the complacency and often with the help of other kids. If we can help kids understand how much bullying hurts, and how in many cases words can hurt you, fewer may cooperate with the cyberbullies. They will think twice before forwarding a hurtful e-mail, visiting a cyberbullying hate site or allowing others to take videos or mobile phone pictures of personal moments or compromising poses of others. We need to teach children not to stand silently

while others are being tormented. While it is crucial that we teach them not to take matters into their own hands (and perhaps become a “vengeful angel” cyberbully themselves) they need to come to us. And if we expect them to trust us, we need to be worthy of that trust.

In addition to not lending their efforts to continue the cyberbullying, if given an anonymous method of reporting cyberbullying web sites, profiles and campaigns, kids can help put an end to cyberbullying entirely. School administration, community groups and even school policing staff can receive these anonymous tips and take action quickly when necessary to shut down the site, profile or stop the cyberbullying itself.

They can even let others know that they won't allow cyberbullying, supporting the victim, making it clear that they won't be used to torment others and that they care about the feelings of others is key.

We need to teach our children that silence, when others are being hurt, is not acceptable. If they don't allow the cyberbullies to use them to embarrass or torment others, cyberbullying will quickly stop.

## Useful Websites

[www.learning.luton.gov.uk](http://www.learning.luton.gov.uk)

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

[www.11million.org.uk](http://www.11million.org.uk)

[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

[www.childnet-int.org.uk](http://www.childnet-int.org.uk)



